

HER GLOVES

BY
ANTHONY E. WILLS

SERGEL'S
ACTING
DRAMA



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HER GLOVES

A FARCE
IN THREE ACTS

By
ANTHONY E. WILLS

Author of "Burley's Ranch,"
"Blundering Billy," Etc.

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Her Gloves

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CAST OF CHARACTERS.

WALTER DILLINGHAM, a dealer in real estate, *Comedy lead*.

JEFFERSON RUGGLES, his father-in-law, *Character*.

ROBERT SLOCUM, a friend of the family, *Juvenile*.

CHARLEY BROOKS, a neighbor, *Comedy*.

JIM RYAN, a theatrical manager, *Comedy*.

MRS. RUGGLES, wife of Jefferson, *Old woman*.

BLANCHE DILLINGHAM, wife of Walter, *Lead*.

DORA RUGGLES, in love with Slocum, *Ingenue*.

ELIZABETH BROOKS, wife of Charley, *Comedy*.

VALESKA BIJOU, a leading lady, *Comedy*.

Five Male—Five Female.

The action of the farce takes place in the home of the Dillinghams, New Rochelle, New York, during the month of May.

ACT I

A PAIR OF GLOVES

(Afternoon)

ACT II


THEY ARE LOST

(A few minutes later)

ACT III

THEY ARE FOUND AGAIN

(Next morning)



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HER GLOVES.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE: *Living room in the home of the Dillinghams, New Rochelle, New York. Large double door c., with portieres. French window R. 3. Door R. 1. Doors L. 1 and L. 3. Two screens, one on either side of door c. Lady's desk and chair against wall R. between door and French window. Pen, ink and paper on desk. Several new blotters on table L. C. Parlor table and three chairs L. C. Couch R. C. Small hand mirror on table L. C. Hall-stand and hat-rack in hall-way. Bell-rope against wall L. Pictures on wall. Bric-a-brac to dress. Carpet down. It is about five o'clock in the afternoon.*

[*At rise, BLANCHE DILLINGHAM, about twenty-eight years of age, neatly dressed, discovered looking from French window. DORA DOUGLAS, aged sixteen, a pretty, vivacious girl, wearing a house dress, covered by a kitchen apron, her sleeves rolled up, is seated at table, reading a letter.*]

[*Rumble of thunder heard off R.*]

DORA. [*Starting.*] My! How that frightened me!

BLANCHE. [*Nervously looking from window.*] I do hope nothing has happened! [*Then turning on DORA, angrily.*] Oh, how can you sit there and read love letters at a time when your poor dad may be battling for his very life on the stormy sea?

DORA. [*Piqued.*] You always look at the dark side

of everything. We should have heard the bell in the light-house had anything happened. [*Up.*] Besides, I began to think something the matter with Bob, until I received this letter.

BLANCHE. He's better, then?

DORA. Hasn't been ill.

BLANCHE. [*Surprised.*] No? Then why—?

DORA. He writes: [*Reading from letter.*] "Been head over heels in work, getting ready for the exams and the school play, which was successfully pulled off last night at the local opera house. All the girl parts were played by fellows, and as the leading lady, they all say I made the hit of the night."

BLANCHE. [*With sarcasm.*] I always understood they attended college to—

[*Peal of thunder.*]

BLANCHE. [*Quickly up to window.*] Good gracious! Did you hear that?

DORA. [*Looking over her shoulder.*] Don't be frightened, Blanche. It's only a thunder storm.

BLANCHE. [*Sighs.*] Perhaps I am unnecessarily alarmed. [*Then with effort.*] When does Bob finish his term?

DORA. He's through already and returns—[*Looking at letter.*] Let me see—what does he say? [*Finding place and reading.*] "Almost as soon as this letter." [*Quickly.*] Why he may be in town this very moment. [*Looking down at dress.*] And if he should call and catch me looking like this! [*Holds hands above head in dismay.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Heard off L. Calling.*] Dora! Dora!

BLANCHE. [*Quickly.*] Mama's calling you.

DORA. [*Hiding letter.*] Please don't tell her about this letter. You know what she thinks of Bob.

[Enter MRS. RUGGLES, aged about fifty, a large woman, stern of manner, wearing a kitchen apron over her house dress, her sleeves rolled up.]

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Sharply to DORA.*] Oh, here you are! And I've been waiting for you to peel the potatoes. What-ever detained you?

DORA. [*Quietly.*] Why—nothing, Mama.

MRS. RUGGLES. A fine excuse, I must say. Well, you get to the kitchen as quick as you can.

DORA. [*Pouting at door L.*] Gee, I wish we had a servant! [*Off L. 1.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Looking after her.*] And so do I. I can't imagine why that employment agency hasn't sent us an applicant as yet. They're usually very prompt.

BLANCHE. [*Looking from window.*] You know how reluctant girls are to accept out-of-town positions.

MRS. RUGGLES. And I can't much blame them. Why your father had to move us all out here is a mystery I've never fathomed. City life never appealed to me—until we came to this mournful place.

[*Peal of thunder.*]

BLANCHE. [*Starts and peers from window.*] Oh, why—why don't they come?

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Comforting her.*] There, there, dear—don't worry. The storm's delayed them a bit. The fishing may have been good and—

BLANCHE. [*Nervously.*] But you forget Walter can't swim.

MRS. RUGGLES. And neither can your dad, for that matter.

BLANCHE. Don't you see—supposing the yacht should capsize!

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Gives a cry.*] Mercy, Blanche! What a thought to enter your head!

BLANCHE. [*Brokenly.*] I just can't help it. Walter seemed to have a premonition something terrible would happen, for he insisted upon my remaining at home.

MRS. RUGGLES. And your father! *Your father* refused to let *me* go!

[*Thunder heard off.*]

BLANCHE. Do you remember how nervous they both were? [*Wringing hands.*] Why—oh, why—don't they come?

MRS. RUGGLES. [*On tip-toes, anxiously looking off.*] Can't you see anything of them?

BLANCHE. It's so foggy, I can't even make out the landing.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Quickly taking telescope from desk and up to window.*] Let me see. [*Peers through telescope.*]

[*Thunder continues.*]

BLANCHE. [*Anxiously.*] Well—does that help any?

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Busy with telescope.*] No. I can't see *at all* with this rig-a-ma-jig.

[*Enter DORA hurriedly from L. 1, a bandage in L. hand and holding out fore-finger of R.*]

DORA. [*Crying.*] Mama! Mama! I've cut my finger!

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Quickly.*] No! [*Then putting telescope on desk, and quickly over to DORA.*] You poor dear! Let me see. [*Examines her finger.*]

DORA. [*Brokenly.*] The knife slipped, and instead of cutting the potato—

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Sympathetically.*] You cut your

finger. I know how it is! It's happened to me hundreds of times. [*Commences to bandage finger.*]

BLANCHE. [*Looking from window.*] Nothing but fog! fog! fog!

DORA. [*Whining.*] And nothing but work! work! work! Since we've no servant.

MRS. RUGGLES. There, there, we'll overcome that too, presently.

[*Doorbell rings below.*]

BLANCHE. [*Quickly.*] Who can that be?

MRS. RUGGLES. Probably the men folks.

BLANCHE. [*Overjoyed.*] That's right. They may have landed at another pier. Oh why didn't I think of it before. [*Quickly off C. going R.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Finishing bandaging.*] Blanche is so nervous. I knew nothing could have happened. There—now you're right.

DORA. [*Kissing her.*] Good, dear mama.

[*Enter BLANCHE, door C.*]

BLANCHE. [*Sorrowfully.*] 'It's only Mr. Slocum!

[*Enter ROBERT SLOCUM, a college student, about twenty years of age, wearing college hat, tan shoes, summer suit, stock and carrying a suit-case.*]

DORA. [*Espying him.*] Bob!

SLOCUM. [*Dropping suit-case and throwing arms about her.*] Dora!

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Haughtily draws away L.*]

SLOCUM. [*Over to MRS. RUGGLES—offering hand.*]
How are you, Mrs. Ruggles?

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Coldly.*] Very well, sir.

SLOCUM. [*Business.*]

DORA. When did you get in?

SLOCUM. Just landed. Came up to spend Saturday and Sunday.

DORA. Pshaw—can't you remain longer?

SLOCUM. [*Looking at MRS. RUGGLES.*] Well, I'd like to, and it all depends on—

DORA. [*To MRS. RUGGLES.*] Bob can use the spare room up-stairs, eh mama?

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Endeavoring to hide her anger.*] I suppose so, my dear.

SLOCUM. [*Protesting.*] Oh, I don't want to put you out any.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*With flashing eyes.*] Not at all.

SLOCUM. Very well, then. Since you insist, why I can't very well refuse.

BLANCHE. [*Takes suit-case.*] I'll take this up for you. [*Exits C. going L.*]

SLOCUM. [*To DORA.*] And now you must tell me the news. How are things?

DORA. [*Sadly.*] Not good. [*Holding up bandaged finger.*] Look at this! I just cut my finger.

MRS. RUGGLES. We're very much dissatisfied with our new home.

SLOCUM. I'm sorry to hear that. And the men folks?

MRS. RUGGLES. Are always out sailing.

SLOCUM. [*Surprised.*] Then you've got a sailboat, too?

DORA. Sure—over a week now. A thirty footer. Walter's.

SLOCUM. By jove, he must have struck it rich!

MRS. RUGGLES. Might better have saved his money.

DORA. [*Confidentially.*] You know there's a big boom on Pleasure Island.

SLOCUM. So I've read in the New York papers.

DORA. And Walter's been selling his lots like hot cakes.

[*Enter* BLANCHE *hurriedly door c.*]

BLANCHE. [*Joyfully.*] It's all right! [*Hurries to window.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Anxiously.*] You've seen them?

BLANCHE. [*Looking off.*] From the upper window.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Who has taken up telescope. Looking through same from window.*] Yes, yes—they've put up alongside the landing.

DORA. I'm so relieved.

SLOCUM. Think I'll romp down and welcome them. Walter *will* be surprised.

DORA. Yes, yes.

SLOCUM. Haven't seen the old chap in six months.

BLANCHE. [*Looking from window.*] Better take an umbrella. It's begun to sprinkle.

DORA. I'll loan you mine. [*Quickly off L. 1.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Looking off.*] My! How foggy! I can't make out anything but a great white spot.

BLANCHE. [*Looking off.*] The sail!

[*Enter* DORA *from L. 1 with umbrella.*]

DORA. [*Handing to SLOCUM.*] Here you are.

SLOCUM. [*Taking it.*] Thanks. Now how do I get to the landing?

DORA. [*Pointing to window.*] Cut right across the lawn and—

BLANCHE. [*Turning.*] No, no—you'll get your feet wet. Better take the gravel path at the rear of the house.

DORA. That's so. [*At door c.*] Come on. I'll show you the way. [*Off door c., going L.*]

SLOCUM. You're a dear. [*Follows her off.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Placing telescope on desk.*] I wish Dora wouldn't make such a fuss over Mr. Slocum.

BLANCHE. [*Down to couch and seating.*] Why, mama—he's an estimable young man.

MRS. RUGGLES. And without money. I haven't forgotten the struggle you had with Walter the first years of your married life.

BLANCHE. But hasn't it come out all right?

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Conceitedly.*] Well, yes—simply because he followed my advice. But if I have my way, Dora will marry a man of means.

[*It begins to rain without.*]

BLANCHE. [*Quickly up to window.*] Hello!—it's started to rain. [*Then suddenly.*] And just look!

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Up to window, looking off.*] Why, it's your dad and Walter!

BLANCHE. And on a dead run!

MRS. RUGGLES. I didn't think it in your father. [*Coming down c.*] I suppose he'll have his old rheumatic pains again tonight.

BLANCHE. [*Calling off.*] Hurry Walter, hurry!

[*Enter WALTER DILLINGHAM, a smooth-shaven, good looking man about thirty, wearing a soiled pair of white duck trousers, jacket with coat collar turned up and a soft hat well pulled down over his eyes.*]

WALTER. [*Breathlessly.*] Blanche! [*Throws arms about her.*]

BLANCHE. [*Drawing away.*] My! but you're wet! Let me get you another coat. [*Off L. 1.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. I advised you not to go fishing. Where's Jefferson? [*Up to window.*] Oh—he's here!

[*Enter* JEFFERSON RUGGLES, a short, white-haired gentleman, with side whiskers, wearing a sailor's oil coat and hat, both dripping wet and carrying a string of two or three small fish.]

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Drawing away.*] Jefferson! Jefferson!

JEFFERSON. [*Looking himself over.*] I know, my dear, but I can't help it. [*Breathlessly to* WALTER.] I'll bet I broke all records up to a quarter of a mile making that sprint.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Assisting him off with oil coat, under which he has another jacket.*] I hope you didn't catch cold.

JEFFERSON. Nothing like it, my dear. Nothing like it.

WALTER. [*Has removed hat and coat and is shaking latter.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Sharply.*] Be careful, Walter! Don't get that all over the carpet. You know we're without a servant.

WALTER. [*Stopping.*] Oh, you've told me that a hundred times since yesterday.

[*Enter* BLANCHE with smoking jacket.]

BLANCHE. Here you are. [*Helping him on with it.*] Feel comfy?

WALTER. You bet.

BLANCHE. [*Taking other coats, etc.*] I'll dry these by the kitchen fire.

JEFFERSON. And you might fry these for dinner. I'm as hungry as a bear. [*Holds up string of fish.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. And there isn't enough to feed a cat.

BLANCHE. [*Taking fish.*] You surely didn't have much luck. [*Exits* L. 1.]

JEFFERSON. [*Significantly nudging Walter. Aside.*] Didn't we, though?

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Seating chair R. of table.*]

DORA. [*On from C., surprised.*] Hello! Bob missed you, after all.

WALTER. Bob? Why, what—

DORA. Nothing—only Bob Slocum arrived and went to the landing to surprise you.

WALTER. Too bad we didn't see him.

JEFFERSON. [*Breathlessly.*] We traveled so fast we didn't see *anything*.

DORA. Poor boy!—he went by the gravel path. [*At window—looking off.*] I'm afraid he's going to get dreadfully wet.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Who has been tapping fingers on table.*] Well?

JEFFERSON. [*Turning.*] Well—what?

MRS. RUGGLES. Haven't you a word to say about your trip?

JEFFERSON. Oh, yes—our trip. There's little to say.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Haughtily.*] Really?

JEFFERSON. The fact is, we fished and fished and—well, that's about all we *did* do.

MRS. RUGGLES. I don't see why you objected to our accompanying you?

JEFFERSON. Now, my dear, what fun is there for women folks in fishing?

MRS. RUGGLES. We could at least have watched you—kept you company.

WALTER. That's just it. I explained everything this morning. Your talking would have scared the fish away.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Up. Indignant.*] My talking?

JEFFERSON. [*Quickly.*] Anybody's talking, my dear—anybody's.

WALTER. We thought by going alone we'd have better luck.

MRS. RUGGLES. Looked upon *me*, I suppose, as a hoo-doo. Well, from the number of fish you caught, your *thought* wasn't good for much.

WALTER. Well, if it's going to make all this difference, *next time*—

MRS. RUGGLES. I don't care anything about next time. I wanted to go to-day. [*Buries eyes in handkerchief.*]

JEFFERSON. [*Aside to WALTER.*] Can you beat that? [*Then endeavoring to quiet her.*] There, there, my dear. I'm sorry we didn't take you. [*Winking at WALTER.*] We missed your delightful company—and didn't have any fun, after all; did we, Walter?

WALTER. [*Winking back at him.*] Not a bit. It was an experiment—but never again for mine.

JEFFERSON. To-morrow we'll all go—eh, Walter?

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Drying eyes.*] Honest?

JEFFERSON. [*His arms about her.*] Honest!

DORA. [*Looking from window.*] Bob managed to board the yacht, but I can't understand what detains him.

WALTER. [*Going to window. Looking over her shoulder.*] Probably sizing her up. He'll be here presently.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*To DORA.*] Better finish the potatoes, Dora. Goodness only knows at what hour we'll have dinner to-night.

DORA. Yes, mama. [*Off L. 1.*]

WALTER. [*Looking at hands.*] In the meantime I'll be washing up a bit. [*Crosses to L. 3.*]

JEFFERSON. [*Looking at his hands.*] A good idea! Me, too! [*Follows him.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. But for pity's sake don't be long. You know I dislike Mr. Slocum, and it's embarrassing for *me* to entertain him.

WALTER. [*Exits L. 3.*]

JEFFERSON. [*At door L. 3—throwing her a kiss.*] Just a moment, my butterfly. [*Off L. 3.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. [*All smiles, looking after him.*] Isn't he the dear? [*Then over to window.*]

[*Enter BLANCHE from L. 1.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. Oh, I'm so glad you're here. Mr. Slocum's returning. I'll leave you to do the talking.

[*Enter SLOCUM from window, his umbrella dripping.*]

SLOCUM. Well, I missed them. [*Then observing umbrella.*] Gee!—what'll I do with this?

BLANCHE. I'll take it. [*Relieves him of umbrella, taking it off L. 1.*]

SLOCUM. Thank you. There's wasn't a soul on board. She's a dandy, though. Looked her over, and am just dying for a sail. [*Then suddenly.*] Oh, say, I nearly forgot to give you these. [*Draws forth a pair of long, light-colored lady's gloves.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Looking at them.*] Why—what are they?

SLOCUM. [*Holding up gloves.*] A pair of lady's gloves, I think,—I'm not sure. Found them aboard the yacht, and thought they belonged to you.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Nonplused.*] Why, no—I never owned a pair like that in my life.

SLOCUM. [*Puzzled.*] No?

[*Enter BLANCHE L. 1.*]

SLOCUM. [*To BLANCHE.*] Then perhaps they belong to you.

BLANCHE. [*Glancing at gloves.*] Good gracious—no!

SLOCUM. [*Puzzled.*] Could I have made a mistake?

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Endeavoring to take gloves.*] Let me get a closer look.

SLOCUM. Never mind—it's all right. We'll say no more about them.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Sharply.*] Oh, yes, we will! And a whole lot more! There's some deep mystery here. You find a pair of lady's gloves on Walter's yacht—

BLANCHE. [*Starts.*] Walter's yacht?

MRS. RUGGLES. Yes, my dear. [*Then to SLOCUM.*] A pair belonging to none of the feminine members of his family—and I believe it only fair that the matter should be thoroughly explained.

SLOCUM. [*Crushed. Aside.*] What an ass I am! I've put my foot in it for keeps this time—and I thought it would put me in soft.

MRS. RUGGLES. Come—give me the gloves!

SLOCUM. [*Hesitates.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Firmly.*] Give me them, or never again darken the doors of this house!

SLOCUM. O Lor'! [*Sadly. Aside.*] I'm sorry for you, Walter,—sorry for you. [*Reluctantly hands her gloves.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Looking at gloves.*] A dainty hand, too. I wonder what she's like?

BLANCHE. [*Quickly to MRS. RUGGLES.*] Oh, you don't mean?—

MRS. RUGGLES. My dear, I thought there was some motive for not letting us take the trip—now I'm sure of it. They had another woman aboard!

BLANCHE. [*Gives a cry and sinks into chair L.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Comforting her.*] There, there; we'll soon learn the truth.

SLOCUM. [*Down R. Aside.*] I guess I'm the original "trouble-maker." Oh, why,—why didn't I leave the blamed old gloves where I found them?

BLANCHE. [*Brokenly.*] O Walter! Walter! how could you deceive me this way?

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Patting her on shoulder.*] Hush, child; they'll hear you.

[*Enter WALTER and JEFFERSON L. 3.*]

WALTER AND JEFFERSON. [*Advancing.*] Well, well, Bobby! [*Shake his hand.*]

WALTER. Glad to see you. You'll have to take a trip on my yacht to-morrow.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Pointedly.*] Are you planning another "trip"?

WALTER. [*Surprised—coming down L.*] Why, I don't understand?

JEFFERSON. [*Nervously alongside of him.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. [*With arms folded.*] On your trip to-day, who accompanied you?

JEFFERSON. [*Aside. Staggered.*] Great Jupiter!

WALTER. [*Nervously—remains silent.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Sternly.*] Well, why don't you answer?

WALTER. [*With assumed dignity.*] Madam, I object to being questioned in this manner before my wife, my friend here [*Pointing to SLOCUM*], and this! [*Referring to JEFFERSON.*]

JEFFERSON. [*Business.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. Your wife is as anxious to know as I am.

BLANCHE. [*Sobs loudly.*]

WALTER. [*Surprised.*] Hello!—crying? [*Steps toward her.*] My dear—

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Confronting him.*] Stop! You must first answer my question!

WALTER. [*Aside. To JEFFERSON.*] What's up?

JEFFERSON. [*Meekly.*] It's all up.

MRS. RUGGLES. Who was on the yacht with you?

WALTER. You asked me that before.

MRS. RUGGLES. And received no reply. Now, answer it!

WALTER. [*Business.*] Well, your husband—my father-in-law—[*Pointing at JEFFERSON.*]—him!

MRS. RUGGLES. You two alone?

WALTER. [*Meekly.*] Yes, ma'am.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*To JEFFERSON.*] No one else?

JEFFERSON. [*Meekly.*] No, ma'am.

MRS. RUGGLES. You're quite certain?

WALTER AND JEFFERSON. [*Emphatically.*] Positive!

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Producing pair of gloves and holding them up.*] Then to whom do these belong?

WALTER AND JEFFERSON. [*Turn to look—then both start.*] O Lor'!

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Stamping foot.*] Answer me! To whom do they belong?

WALTER. Why, to a woman, of course.

BLANCHE. [*Sobbing.*] A woman! a woman!

JEFFERSON. [*Sorrowfully; unconsciously imitating BLANCHE.*] Yes!—a woman!—a woman!

MRS. RUGGLES. [*To WALTER.*] What woman?

WALTER. [*Turning to JEFFERSON.*] What woman?

JEFFERSON. [*Business.*] Don't ask me. How should I know?

MRS. RUGGLES. Well, you ought to. Mr. Slocum found them on the yacht.

JEFFERSON AND WALTER. [*Business.*] Whow!

SLOCUM. [*Pleadingly.*] I didn't know, old chap!

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Stamping foot.*] Silence! [*Then to WALTER.*] You, of course, realize that in these Blanche has sufficient grounds for divorce?

WALTER. [*Sorrowfully.*] But, my dear, I—

MRS. RUGGLES. I had my suspicions of the *trip* from the first. [*With sarcasm.*] You both wanted to be alone. We might disturb the fish. [*Dangling gloves before them.*] But how about this fine lady?

WALTER. [*Pulling himself together. With effort.*] Madam—this has gone far enough!

JEFFERSON. [*With quivering voice.*] Far enough.

WALTER. I had intended to spare you a recital of the details of our trip, but now you shall hear all—

JEFFERSON. [*In deep bass voice.*] Yes!—all!

WALTER. [*Dramatically.*] Everything! [*Then changing tone.*] We were not alone on the yacht, as you have gleaned.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Dangling gloves.*] These abominations infer as much.

WALTER. [*Pointing at gloves. With feeling.*] They belong to poor Charley's wife.

MRS. RUGGLES. Charley? And who might Charley be?

JEFFERSON. You don't know Charley?

WALTER. Charley Brooks? [*Repeating still louder.*] *Charley Brooks!*

MRS. RUGGLES. I'm only anxious to *know* about these gloves.

WALTER. Charley Brooks is our neighbor—two doors below.

JEFFERSON. [*Loudly.*] And his wife is—

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Anxiously.*] Yes, yes?

JEFFERSON. [*After an instant's pause. Quietly.*] His wife—

BLANCHE. [*Rising.*] Oh, it's plain they are endeavoring to gain time. [*To MRS. RUGGLES.*] Come, mother; let's leave this roof forever.

JEFFERSON AND WALTER. [*Restraining them.*] No, no;—don't do anything rash.

MRS. RUGGLES. Then why don't you explain?

WALTER. Because you won't give me the chance. It was this way. You women folks have been complaining about the yacht ever since I bought it.

MRS. RUGGLES AND BLANCHE. And not without reason.

WALTER. Therefore I decided to sell the blamed thing, unbeknown to you; and so when Charley—

JEFFERSON. We always call him Charley.

WALTER. [*Continuing.*] When Charley made me the offer and wanted to take a trial sail, I couldn't very well refuse him—could I?

JEFFERSON. Could we?

WALTER. I set to-day as the time, and told you we were going on a fishing trip,—don't you see?

JEFFERSON. It's all very simple—plain as day.

WALTER. And when he brought his wife along, I couldn't very well refuse to let her accompany us;—now honestly, could I?

JEFFERSON. Of course not!

BLANCHE. [*Meekly.*] Well, I don't see why you should have been so secretive about selling the yacht?

JEFFERSON. What do women folks know about business matters, anyway?

MRS. RUGGLES. Enough to realize the peculiarities of this transaction. What price did he pay?

WALTER. Nothing—

JEFFERSON. The deal fell through.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Pointedly.*] Oh, I see. Then you had your whole *trip* for nothing. [*Then, after a pause.*] I don't believe I ever had the pleasure of meeting this Mrs. Brooks.

BLANCHE. Neither have I.

WALTER. Nice old woman!

MRS. RUGGLES. I should imagine so, if she wears *these* things. [*Dangles gloves in front of them.*]

JEFFERSON. I don't think you'd like her.

MRS. RUGGLES. Time alone will tell.

JEFFERSON. [*Aside.*] Well, hope she doesn't tell the truth.

WALTER. [*His hands on MRS. RUGGLES' shoulders.*] And now that you know all, let me have the gloves, so that I may return them to their proper owner.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Draws gloves behind her back.*] Never you mind; I'll attend to that.

WALTER. [*Staggered.*] You don't mean you'd—

MRS. RUGGLES. I intend to take them over to Mrs. Brooks myself.

JEFFERSON. [*Anxiously.*] But, my dear, you've never met the lady.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Crossing to L. 1.*] I can easily introduce myself.

WALTER. Exceedingly bad form! Besides, it's raining—you'll get wet—

MRS. RUGGLES. I'll slip on my raincoat. It won't take me a minute. [*Exits L. 1.*]

BLANCHE. [*Over to L. 1.*] And I'll go with you. It will be music to hear the story from her lips. [*Off L. 1.*]

WALTER AND JEFFERSON. [*Both limply sinking into seats.*] Good heavens! [*Then espying SLOCUM and pointing at him. Hoarsely.*] This is all your fault!

SLOCUM. [*Coming down.*] My fault?

JEFFERSON. [*Whining.*] Yes—for butting into other people's affairs. But I'll have my revenge. Just wait until you're married to my daughter!

SLOCUM. What harm's been done anyway, since the gloves belong to Mrs. Brooks?

WALTER. A great deal—[*Glances around before speaking*—since they don't!

SLOCUM. [*Staggered.*] They don't?

JEFFERSON. [*Repeating—in deep bass voice.*] They don't.

SLOCUM. But you said—

WALTER. I *had* to say something.

JEFFERSON. And that's the first thing came to his mind. [*His head buried in hands.*] O Bobby! Bobby! how can I ever forgive you?

WALTER. Charley Brooks is an old pal of mine. We play hearts together, 'most every day, going to and from the city. His name was on the tip of my tongue from the first.

SLOCUM. And the gloves?

WALTER. [*Glances around before speaking.*] Belong to an actress.

SLOCUM. [*Surprised. Loudly.*] An actress!

JEFFERSON. [*Starting up in great confusion.*] Yes;—but for pity's sake don't shout it from the housetops!

WALTER. I can't give you the particulars now.

JEFFERSON. We've got to get them away from my wife—

WALTER. Before she can call on Mrs. Brooks.

SLOCUM. And without letting the cat out of the bag.

WALTER. Marvelous! [*Slapping him on back.*] Say—you're a wonder!

JEFFERSON. [*Sadly.*] He's *more* than that.

WALTER. Mrs. Brooks must call here for the gloves, in person.

SLOCUM. But if, as you say, she doesn't own them—

WALTER. O Bobby! Bobby! I'm disappointed in you, after all.

SLOCUM. [*Suddenly.*] Why, you don't mean—

WALTER. Why not? Haven't I heard a lot about your success in the college plays?

SLOCUM. But it's taking an awful chance. [*Then, after a pause.*] However, I got you into this scrape, and I'll try to get you out.

JEFFERSON. [*Up.*] You will?

SLOCUM. Yep. [*Up to door c.*] There's a costumer near the depot, isn't there?

WALTER. Yes, yes.

SLOCUM. Just you detain the women for a quarter of an hour—and leave the rest to me.

JEFFERSON. [*Quickly.*] But, hold on. How'll we explain your absence? They'll want to know where you've got to.

WALTER. That's so.

SLOCUM. It *will* look suspicious—won't it?

WALTER. [*Suddenly.*] I have it. A telegram!

JEFFERSON. [*Puzzled.*] A telegram?

SLOCUM. Calling me to New York.

JEFFERSON. [*Enthusiastically.*] Hurrah!

WALTER. [*Seating at desk.*] Stating your great-great-grandfather—

SLOCUM. Has passed in his chips! Immense!

WALTER. [*Quickly writes on telegram blank—then, finishing*] Quick!—a blotter.

JEFFERSON. [*Looking around.*] Where are they?

WALTER. On the table.

JEFFERSON. [*Espying blotter on table l. c.*] Oh, yes. [*Takes one and hands to WALTER.*]

WALTER. [*Blots telegram.*] There! [*Hands to SLOCUM.*] How's that strike you?

SLOCUM. [*Reading and folding.*] Couldn't be better.

[Enter MRS. RUGGLES, followed by BLANCHE, each wearing raincoat and carrying an umbrella.]

WALTER. [To BLANCHE.] My dear, Robert has received bad news.

JEFFERSON. [Brokenly.] Such bad news!

SLOCUM. [Appears affected.] Very bad news!

BLANCHE AND MRS. RUGGLES. [Quickly over to him.] What is it?

JEFFERSON. [Sadly.] His great-great-grandmother—

WALTER. [Quickly correcting.] Grandfather!

JEFFERSON. Quite so—grandfather has passed to the Great Beyond.

BLANCHE AND MRS. RUGGLES. Poor boy!

JEFFERSON. Poor grandfather!

WALTER. Necessitating his immediate return to the city.

MRS. RUGGLES. How unfortunate!

BLANCHE. But he can return after the—

MRS. RUGGLES. [Nudges her to be quiet.]

SLOCUM. I'm sorry to have to tear myself away like this.

WALTER. Dora will be disappointed.

JEFFERSON. You can say good-by to her as you go out.

SLOCUM. Good-by, all.

ALL. Good-by, good-by!

SLOCUM. [Off door c. going R.]

MRS. RUGGLES. Well, I'm glad he's gone. [Starts toward c.] And now we'll just run over and return these—[Holding up gloves]—and—

WALTER. [Quickly.] But, my dears, you wouldn't venture out in weather like this?

BLANCHE. It's stopped raining.

JEFFERSON. [*Looking off. Aside.*] Confound it—so it has!

WALTER. Yes, my dear; but dinner!

JEFFERSON. [*Quickly turning.*] I'm famished—nearly starved to death.

MRS. RUGGLES. We'll be back by the time Dora—

WALTER. [*Quickly.*] Besides, my dear, she'll probably be here in a few minutes, anyway.

MRS. RUGGLES AND BLANCHE. Be here? Mrs. Brooks?

WALTER. Why, certainly! To show you how little we had to fear, I told Bobby to stop in on his way to the depot—

MRS. RUGGLES. And ask Mrs. Brooks to call here?

WALTER. And at once!

BLANCHE. [*To MRS. RUGGLES.*] What did I tell you, mama? They are innocent. [*Throwing arms about WALTER's neck.*] You good, dear fellow!

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Throwing arms about JEFFERSON.*] Jefferson, my own!

JEFFERSON AND WALTER. [*Unseen by women, wink at each other while embracing them.*]

[*Door bell rings below.*]

WALTER. That may be her now.

JEFFERSON. [*To MRS. RUGGLES.*] Now, madam,—now learn how you have misjudged us!

[*Enter DORA door c.*]

DORA. It's Mr. Brooks!

JEFFERSON AND WALTER. [*Staggered.*] Mr. Brooks?

MRS. RUGGLES. Come to make excuses for his wife, no doubt.

[Enter CHARLEY BROOKS, a bald-headed, mild-mannered man, about forty, door c.]

JEFFERSON AND WALTER. [Quickly up, grasping him by hand.] Charley! Charley, old boy! Glad to see you. [Referring to ladies.] Know our wives. [To ladies.] Wives,—know Charley Brooks.

WALTER. [To CHARLEY.] I suppose your wife sent you after the gloves.

CHARLEY. [Puzzled.] What gloves?

JEFFERSON. Her gloves, of course.

BLANCHE. [To CHARLEY.] Tell me, honestly, Mr. Brooks,—was your wife on my husband's yacht this afternoon?

CHARLEY. Not that I know of.

MRS. RUGGLES. [To WALTER, triumphantly.] Ah—you see!

WALTER. One moment. I asked Charley to keep our negotiations a secret, and he acted under that promise in making his reply. [Kicking him in leg.] Didn't you, Charley?

JEFFERSON. [Unseen by ladies, is winking significantly.]

CHARLEY. [Finally.] Yes.

WALTER. You were on my yacht this afternoon? Speak out, Charley; I have nothing to conceal. [Nudges him as before.] I release you from your promise.

CHARLEY. I was.

JEFFERSON. [On other side of him.] And your wife was with you? [Nudges him in side and winks significantly.]

CHARLEY. [Greatly puzzled.] She was.

WALTER. And your wife left her gloves on board? [Nudges him.]

CHARLEY. She did.

JEFFERSON. And you called over after them. [*Nudges him.*]

CHARLEY. I did.

JEFFERSON. [*Coming down.*] That's all there's to it. Spoken like a man!

WALTER. [*To MRS. RUGGLES.*] Now are you satisfied?

MRS. RUGGLES. [*At door L. 1.*] No—not until I've had a talk with Mrs. Brooks. [*Exits L. 1.*]

BLANCHE. [*Starts after her.*]

WALTER. But, surely, my dear, you—

BLANCHE. To be candid, Walter, I am more mystified than ever. [*Exits off L. 1.*]

JEFFERSON. [*Disconsolately.*] We're lost! Lost!

CHARLEY. [*Puzzled.*] Say,—what *is* this, anyway?

WALTER. That's what we would like to know. What brought you here?

CHARLEY. Oh, I've had a deuced time at home. My wife's infernally jealous, as you know. Told her this morning I'd be delayed at the office all afternoon, and then took in the races. She drops in unexpectedly and learns I'd fibbed; and to square things, I told her I got through earlier than I anticipated, met you on the train, and you insisted on my taking a sail in your yacht.

JEFFERSON AND WALTER. [*Both slap him on shoulder.*] Good! Good!

CHARLEY. Hold on. What's the matter?

WALTER. We've got troubles of our own. Can't explain—any more than to say we told our women folks that you and your wife had taken a trip with us this afternoon.

CHARLEY. I get the drift of things. But my wife!—how about her? She'll never stand for— [*Over to window and anxiously looks off.*]

JEFFERSON. Oh, that's all fixed.

WALTER. You know Bobby Slocum?

CHARLEY. Little Bobby? Sure. Met him in your office dozens of times.

WALTER. Well, he's going to impersonate your wife.

CHARLEY. [*Surprised.*] Impersonate her?

WALTER. Sure—put on a wig—come here—claim the gloves and save the day.

CHARLEY. [*Glancing from window.*] But supposing my wife should drop in in the meantime?

WALTER. Oh, she wouldn't do that, would she?

CHARLEY. Boys, she's liable to do anything. I've got an idea she followed me here. Of late she hardly lets me out of her sight.

JEFFERSON. And I thought Lulu was the limit!

WALTER. [*Suddenly. To JEFFERSON.*] By Jove!—supposing they should have left the house by the rear way?

JEFFERSON. [*Alarmed.*] I never thought of that.

WALTER. [*Over to door L. 1.*] We'd better keep an eye on them. [*To CHARLEY.*] Look out for Slocum—he'll be along any minute now. [*Off L. 1.*]

JEFFERSON. [*At door L. 1.*] And for heaven's sake, get your stories to hitch. Lulu isn't as simple as she looks. [*Off L. 1.*]

CHARLEY. [*Glances cautiously from window.*] I don't see anything of my wife. Must have given her the slip, after all. [*Coming down.*] If only I'd told the truth in the first place, I wouldn't be in this wretched stew now. [*Sighs.*] Well, I suppose I've got to—

[*Knock heard outside window.*]

CHARLEY. [*Starts up.*] Wonder what that was?
[*Listens.*]

[*Knock repeated.*]

CHARLEY. There it goes again. [*Up to window, then starts back.*] Oh!

[*Enter from window, VALESKA BIJOU, a fine-looking woman, wearing a striking spangled gown and large picture hat, carrying a pretty parasol.*]

VALESKA. [*Entering.*] I beg pardon—but does Mr. Dillingham live here?

CHARLEY. He does.

VALESKA. I tried the bell a number of times, and it didn't seem to ring. I came after my gloves.

CHARLEY. Your gloves, eh? [*Coming down. Aside.*] It's Bobby Slocum—sure as I live. [*Glancing back at VALESKA.*] And with a perfect make-up! [*Loudly.*] Come in!

VALESKA. [*Comes down R., placing parasol on top of desk.*]

CHARLEY. [*Sizing her up.*] Don't suppose you remember me?

VALESKA. [*Looking at him.*] I can't say that I do.

CHARLEY. [*Winking at her.*] Well, *you're* certainly well made up.

VALESKA. [*Indignantly.*] Made up? How dare you, sir?

CHARLEY. [*Glancing around.*] Come, come;—I know all about it. Walter put me on.

VALESKA. [*Drawing away.*] I don't understand.

CHARLEY. I'm Charley Brooks. Met you dozens of times. And many a drink we've had together.

VALESKA. [*Haughtily.*] You apparently have been *drinking* to excess.

CHARLEY. No such luck. But, putting all jokes aside—[*Glancing cautiously around before speaking*—we'd better be getting our story straight.

VALESKA. [*Aside.*] What can be the matter with the man. [*Aloud.*] What story?

CHARLEY. Why, Walter must have told you. [*Glancing around. With fingers in vest.*] I'm your husband!

VALESKA. [*Gives a start.*] My husband!

CHARLEY. [*In loud whispers.*] Sure;—it's going to work like a charm! They'll never know the truth.

VALESKA. [*Aside.*] The man's insane—a raving maniac! [*Cautiously crosses to L. 1.*] Help! Help! Help!

CHARLEY. [*Nervously.*] Be careful! You'll give the snap away. [*Glancing around.*] It wouldn't do to let my other wife hear of this.

VALESKA. He thinks he's a Mormon. [*Dodges R. and L. behind table.*]

CHARLEY. [*Disgusted.*] Say, cut it out, Bobby! You'll spoil the whole thing.

VALESKA. Bobby? Bobby? Now he takes me for a man! [*Greatly alarmed.*]

CHARLEY. [*Puzzled.*] Why, ain't you little Bobby as I used to know—Bobby Slocum?

VALESKA. [*Drawing herself to a height.*] Sir—I am—
[*Enter JEFFERSON and WALTER doors L. 1 and L. 3.*]

JEFFERSON AND WALTER. [*Espying her.*] The actress!
[*Seize her by arms and hurry her into room R. 1, loudly closing and locking same.*]

CHARLEY. [*Staggered.*] The actress?

JEFFERSON. Owner of the gloves!

CHARLEY. And I mistook her for—

WALTER. [*Finger to lips.*] Sh—the ladies!

JEFFERSON. [*Quickly over to window, looking off.*]

WALTER. [*With back to door R. 1, guards same.*]

[*Enter MRS. RUGGLES and BLANCHE L. 1.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Anxiously.*] What were those cries for help?

WALTER. Cries for what? I heard nothing.

JEFFERSON. Neither did I.

CHARLEY. [*Shakes head in negative.*]

BLANCHE. Strange!

MRS. RUGGLES. You could hear them all over the house.

JEFFERSON. The wind, my dear, the wind.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*To CHARLEY.*] It sounded like a woman's voice.

WALTER. [*Nervously.*] Mrs. Brooks will be here directly.

MRS. RUGGLES. Thank goodness! Then we'll have done with this terrible suspense.

BLANCHE. This fearful doubt!

[*Bell rings below.*]

JEFFERSON. At last! At last!

WALTER. [*Slapping CHARLEY on shoulder.*] Brace up and prepare to meet your wife.

CHARLEY. [*His knees quaking.*] Supposing it should really be my wife.

WALTER. [*Starts.*] I never thought of that.

[*Enter DORA door c.*]

DORA. Mrs. Brooks.

MRS. RUGGLES. Thank goodness!

[*Enter c., ROBERT SLOCUM, wearing a blonde wig, a clinging gown, and a picture hat.*]

JEFFERSON AND WALTER. [*Quickly on either side of SLOCUM, shaking his hand.*] Delighted, Mrs. Brooks;—delighted!

WALTER. [*Presenting BLANCHE.*] Know my wife.

JEFFERSON. [*Presenting MRS. RUGGLES. With sweeping bow.*] And mine!

SLOCUM. [*Makes a bow and nearly loses his balance.*]

JEFFERSON. [*Aside.*] If Lulu knew the truth!

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Referring to CHARLEY.*] We had already met your husband.

SLOCUM. [*Astonished.*] My husband!

BLANCHE. Yes;—he's been waiting for you.

SLOCUM. [*Recognizing CHARLEY.*] Charley Brooks! Whow! It's all over! Here's where I get it! [*Takes long strides toward window.*]

WALTER. [*Catching him by skirt.*] Hold on!—where are you going?

SLOCUM. I didn't figure on meeting *him* here.

JEFFERSON. [*Nudges CHARLEY.*] Go on!—go on!—say something!—do something!

CHARLEY. [*Bus. With outstretched arms.*] My dear!

SLOCUM. [*Looking at him.*] Do you really mean it?

WALTER. Of course he does.

SLOCUM. [*Down—throwing arms about CHARLEY.*] Charley, dear.

JEFFERSON. [*To MRS. RUGGLES—aside.*] They haven't been on the best of terms lately.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*To SLOCUM.*] I suppose you called in answer to my husband's summons.

SLOCUM. I *called* for my gloves.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Holding up gloves.*] Are these the ones?

SLOCUM. [*Quickly taking them.*] The identical. Oh, I'm so glad you found them. I must have left them on the yacht—[*To CHARLEY*—eh, ducky dear?

JEFFERSON AND WALTER. [*To MRS. RUGGLES and BLANCHE.*] You see! You see! [*Haughtily pace floor.*]

SLOCUM. [*To MRS. RUGGLES.*] Thank you so much. [*To CHARLEY.*] But we must be going. [*Locking arm in CHARLEY'S. To others.*] We're likely to have another storm.

MRS. RUGGLES AND BLANCHE. [*To husbands—with outstretched arms.*] Can you ever forgive us?

JEFFERSON AND WALTER. [*To one another.*] Can we? [*Finally, after a pause.*] If you promise not to doubt us in the future.

MRS. RUGGLES AND BLANCHE. We do—we do!

JEFFERSON AND WALTER. [*Throw arms about them.*]

SLOCUM AND CHARLEY. [*Arm in arm, starting toward window.*] Good-night—good-night!

ALL. [*Warmly.*] Good-night—good-night!

SLOCUM AND CHARLEY. [*Exit off through window.*]

JEFFERSON AND WALTER. [*Embracing wives, unseen by them, shake each other's hands behind their backs, and laughingly exchange winks as*

CURTAIN DESCENDS.

ACT THE SECOND

SAME SETTING. A FEW MINUTES LATER.

[*At rise, WALTER DILLINGHAM and BLANCHE DILLINGHAM discovered embracing, as are JEFFERSON and MRS. RUGGLES.*]

JEFFERSON AND WALTER. [*Exchanging winks as at close of previous act.*]

[*Enter DORA RUGGLES immediately c.*]

DORA. [*Surprised.*] Well, well—what's happened?

OTHERS. [*Draw confusedly away from each other.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. My dear, everything has been satisfactorily explained. I greatly misjudged your father.

BLANCHE. [*To* WALTER.] You have really, truly forgiven me?

WALTER. Why, of course. The mistake was quite natural. [*Clearing throat.*] Only I must ask you to be more careful in the future. One does not like to be wrongfully accused this way.

DORA. [*Moves down to desk.*] I'm so sorry Bob had to hurry off like that. Wasn't it just terrible about his great-grandfather?

JEFFERSON. Extremely sad, my dear. But, alas, we must all shuffle off this mortal coil.

DORA. [*Discovering parasol on desk, takes it in hands.*] Why, what a pretty parasol!

JEFFERSON. [*Starts.*] Great Cæsar! [*Looks despairingly at* WALTER.]

MRS. RUGGLES. Where did that come from?

WALTER. [*Clearing throat.*] Ahem!—it—it belongs to Dora.

DORA. [*Surprised.*] To me?

WALTER. Yes;—a trifle I brought up from town for you.

DORA. A present?

WALTER. Exactly. In the excitement, I'd forgotten all about it.

DORA. [*Handing it to* BLANCHE.] Isn't it a beauty? [*Then to* WALTER, *giving him a hug.*] Oh, you dear!

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Adjusting a pair of glasses. To* BLANCHE.] Let me take a look at it.

JEFFERSON. [*Aside to* Walter.] Now look out for trouble.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Closely examining parasol.*] And it's initialed!

WALTER AND JEFFERSON. [*Start.*] Initialed?

DORA. Really? [*Joins* BLANCHE *and* MRS. RUGGLES.]

JEFFERSON. [*Mournfully—aside to WALTER.*] What did I tell you?

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Reading from handle.*] "From J. R."

DORA. [*Surprised.*] J. R.?

BLANCHE. Why Walter, those aren't *your* initials

WALTER. Eh—not mine?

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Looking up.*] Yours are W. D. This reads "From J. R."

DORA. [*Suddenly.*] Papa's initials!

WALTER. [*Quickly.*] So they are. Well, it's really a gift from your father—he having paid for the same.

JEFFERSON. Walter has the habit of taking the credit for everything.

DORA. [*Kissing him.*] Good, dear papa.

WALTER. A little joke on my part.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*To JEFFERSON.*] I'm surprised, Jefferson, that you should squander your money this way when *I* have to scrimp and save the year 'round. What did you pay for this thing?

JEFFERSON. [*Troubled.*] Really, my dear, I—I—

WALTER. [*Quickly.*] It was a bargain—a great bargain.

MRS. RUGGLES. I'll wager you didn't get it for a penny less than five dollars.

DORA. [*Reprovingly.*] Mama, you ought not to—

MRS. RUGGLES. Look a gift horse in the mouth, I suppose. I wouldn't say a word if it was something you really needed.

BLANCHE. Dora already has three parasols.

WALTER. Where's the harm in having four?

MRS. RUGGLES. Ridiculous. Where did you make the purchase?

JEFFERSON. [*To WALTER.*] Where?

WALTER. Why Tracey's, of course.

MRS. RUGGLES. Very well. I'm going to town in the morning. [*To DORA.*] We'll exchange it for a hat.

DORA. [*Clapping hands.*] That's right—a hat!

WALTER. [*Quickly.*] Yes, but they *won't* exchange it.

MRS. RUGGLES. Oh, yes, they will.

JEFFERSON. [*Mournfully.*] Oh, no, they won't.

WALTER. [*To JEFFERSON.*] What did the man say?

JEFFERSON. Why he said—he said—[*Turning to WALTER.*] What *did* he say?

WALTER. [*To MRS. RUGGLES.*] Being a special sale, they couldn't think of taking them back.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Crossing to L. 1.*] Well, we'll see about that. They won't give me any such story. [*To others.*] Come, children, it's time we served dinner. [*Exits off L. 1 with parasol.*]

JEFFERSON. [*Calling after her.*] But, my dear.

WALTER. [*To BLANCHE.*] Blanche, you try to persuade your mother to change her mind. What will the clerk think of us?

JEFFERSON. [*Sadly.*] Yes, what will he think?

BLANCHE. [*At door L. 1.*] You know mama—when she's once made up her mind. [*Exits.*]

JEFFERSON and WALTER. [*Sadly.*] You bet we do.

DORA. [*Romps over to L. 1.*]

WALTER. [*To DORA.*] Oh Dora, you tell her. After all, you'd much rather keep the parasol, wouldn't you?

DORA. To tell the truth, I really *need* the hat. [*Off L. 1, laughingly.*]

JEFFERSON and WALTER. [*Crushed, look after her.*]

JEFFERSON. Now what are you going to do?

WALTER. [*Moving to door R. 1.*] The first thing—get rid of the actress.

JEFFERSON. By jove, I'd forgotten all about her.

WALTER. [*Unlocks door.*] Keep an eye on that door.

[*Points to L. 1.*]

JEFFERSON. [*Gingerly closes it.*]

WALTER. [*Opens door R. 1.*]

[*Enter VALESKA BIJOU from R. 1.*]

VALESKA. [*Haughtily.*] So you've finally decided to let me out, eh?

WALTER. Madam, you don't know how greatly we are indebted to you for not making a disturbance the past half hour.

JEFFERSON. Remarkable fortitude on your part.

VALESKA. Having heard all—

WALTER. All?

VALESKA. Why, yes, through the keyhole there. I knew that my presence at the time would have been disquieting.

WALTER. It would have been more than that—a boom-erang!

JEFFERSON. A cyclone!

VALESKA. Besides, I, too, had a reason for not wanting my presence known. [*Glancing around before speaking.*] My husband knew nothing of my trip here today.

JEFFERSON and WALTER. No?

VALESKA. No. And if he, by any chance, learns of it, I'm fearful of the consequences.

JEFFERSON and WALTER. Yes?

VALESKA. For he is one of the most jealous of men and has a temper that would cause him to stop at nothing.

JEFFERSON and WALTER. [*Groan.*] Oh Lor'.

VALESKA. He never would have known of it, had I made that five-thirty train.

WALTER. [*Anxiously.*] And now?

VALESKA. I'm afraid it's too late.

JEFFERSON. [*Consulting watch.*] There's a train at six-thirty—you can easily make that.

WALTER. [*Glancing from window.*] And as the women are in the rear of the house, they'll never be the wiser.

VALESKA. All very well, save for one thing.

JEFFERSON and WALTER. [*Anxiously.*] And that?

VALESKA. My parasol! A gift from my husband, only yesterday, and bearing his initials.

JEFFERSON. [*Thoughtfully.*] J. R.

VALESKA. Jim Ryan being his name. I couldn't think of leaving without it. He would be furious. I should have to explain where I lost it. He might investigate and—

WALTER. Learn the truth. The up-shot is—

JEFFERSON. We've got to get that confounded parasol. But how? How?

JEFFERSON. [*Consulting watch.*] If you managed to leave on that six-thirty—

VALESKA. It would get me in New York in time for the evening performance and might save the day.

WALTER. [*Suddenly.*] I have it. Leave everything to me. I think I've hit on a plan.

JEFFERSON. [*With sickly smile.*] Oh, I know *your* plans.

WALTER. [*To VALESKA.*] Only do as I tell you—when things get going our way—and as soon as you land that parasol—

JEFFERSON. [*Waving hands.*] Make for the train.

WALTER. Quick; someone's coming. [*Ushers her to door R. 1.*]

VALESKA. Only please don't delay. Every minute counts. Now don't forget. [*Off R. 1.*]

WALTER. I couldn't if I would.

JEFFERSON. [*Wipes forehead with handkerchief.*] More trouble. Where will it all end?

WALTER. [*Angrily.*] Oh, shut up, will you? We're nearer out of it now than ever before.

[*Enter CHARLEY BROOKS breathlessly, through window, his L. eye discolored, his collar loosened, his tie awry, hatless, his hair unkempt and his clothing bespattered with mud.*]

JEFFERSON and WALTER. [*Surprised.*] Charley! What's happened?

CHARLEY. The Lord only knows. I've had a terrible time. My wife did this! [*Looks himself over.*]

JEFFERSON and WALTER. Your wife?

CHARLEY. [*Sadly.*] My wife. She was in hiding behind a clump of bushes and saw me come out of here arm in arm—

WALTER. With Bobby!

JEFFERSON. In his feminine garb!

CHARLEY. Exactly, and mistaking him for a woman, began to wreak her vengeance on the two of us with her umbrella.

JEFFERSON. With what result?

CHARLEY. *I'm* the result. Doesn't it look like a complete job? [*Mournfully.*] I'm homeless, wifeless and sore all over.

WALTER. Poor chap. What became of Bobby?

CHARLEY. [*Up to window, glancing off.*] The last I saw of him, he was trying to climb a ten-foot fence while my wife was industriously applying the umbrella.

JEFFERSON. I'm glad of it. He will mix in other people's business, eh?

CHARLEY. [*Coming down.*] Say, boys, get me out of the way somewhere. My wife's liable to drop in here at any moment.

JEFFERSON. Heaven forbid.

WALTER. Now we *are in* for it.

JEFFERSON. We've been *in* it for some time.

WALTER. [*Suddenly.*] What was that? [*Quickly up to window.*] I thought I heard someone on the porch.

CHARLEY. [*Worked up.*] It may be my wife. Oh, what shall I do?

WALTER. [*Peering out.*] It's so dark I can't see.

JEFFERSON. [*To CHARLEY.*] Hide! hide! hide!

CHARLEY. [*Runs wildly about, finally getting under table.*]

[*Enter SLOCUM, his wig and hat awry, his skirt turned around so that the train is in front.*]

WALTER. That you, Bobby?

SLOCUM. All that's left of me. Gee, but I've had a time of it.

JEFFERSON. You look it.

SLOCUM. [*To WALTER.*] Is my hat on straight?

WALTER. You're a sight. [*Assists in making him appear more presentable.*]

SLOCUM. My! how that woman could swing that umbrella, and with what precision! Why she never once missed the target. Who was she, anyway?

WALTER. Charley's wife.

SLOCUM. Poor, poor Charley. [*Then laughing.*] The last I saw of him he was giving a perfect imitation of a streak of lightning. It was wonderful. Where is he now?

CHARLEY. [*Poking head from under table.*] Here!

SLOCUM. *Stay* there. You're better off. This finishes me as a female impersonator. Never again for me. If I only had my own clothes I'd get rid of these forever.

CHARLEY. [*Crawls out from beneath table.*]

JEFFERSON. [*Suddenly.*] Keep quiet—the women are coming.

WALTER. [*Wildly.*] Get out of the way—both of you. Here—these screens!

CHARLEY and SLOCUM. [*Each get behind screens, either side of C. door.*]

JEFFERSON. [*Sighs.*] Where will it all end?

[*Enter MRS. RUGGLES carrying parasol, door L. 1, followed by BLANCHE.*]

JEFFERSON. [*To MRS. RUGGLES.*] Ah, my dear, decided to keep the parasol after all?

MRS. RUGGLES. Nothing of the sort.

WALTER. [*Endeavoring to get it away from her.*] Better let me return it in the morning. I know the girl who sold it to me.

BLANCHE. Girl? Why I thought—

JEFFERSON. [*Quickly*] It was a man, Walter—a man!

WALTER. I said a man.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Stamping foot.*] Nothing of the sort. You said a girl.

WALTER. [*Irritated.*] Well what difference does it make?

MRS. RUGGLES. Enough difference to arouse my suspicions. Nothing can stop me now from paying a visit to Tracey's. [*Crossing to R. 1.*]

WALTER. [*Quickly in front of door R. 1.*] Where are you going?

MRS. RUGGLES. To lock this — [*Referring to parasol*] in the library.

JEFFERSON. [*Groans.*]

WALTER. Never! You can't go in here!

MRS. RUGGLES. Can't go in. I like that. And pray, why not?

WALTER. [*Loudly.*] Because—because—[*Then after a pause to Jefferson*] you tell them.

JEFFERSON. [*Bus.*] Well—because you *can't* go in.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*To BLANCHE.*] The mystery thickens. [*To WALTER.*] You have someone in there you don't want us to see.

WALTER. No, no—you don't understand.

MRS. RUGGLES. Then why do you refuse to open that door?

WALTER. Well because—*that's* why.

BLANCHE. [*To MRS. RUGGLES.*] The window on the porch! I can see through that! [*Starts for window R. 3.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. Yes, yes.

WALTER. [*Wildly.*] Blanche! Blanche! I forbid you! I—

BLANCHE. [*Exits through window.*]

JEFFERSON. [*Is madly pacing up and down.*]

WALTER. [*To MRS. RUGGLES.*] I endeavored to keep this from you. But now—*now you're* going to be sorry.

JEFFERSON. [*Aside.*] And so are we.

MRS. RUGGLES. I'll take my chances on that.

[*Enter BLANCHE hurriedly from window.*]

BLANCHE. [*Hoarsely.*] Mother! Mother! It's a woman!

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Gives a cry.*] A woman?

JEFFERSON and WALTER. [*Together.*] A woman!

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Looking from one to the other.*] So you confess it, eh? [*Pacing floor.*] Oh, what monsters! monsters! monsters!

JEFFERSON. [*Sadly.*] Now *I'm* a monster!

WALTER. Let me explain, Blanche.

BLANCHE. [*Bitterly.*] How can you explain such conduct?

WALTER. The easiest thing in the world, if you'll only listen.

BLANCHE. [*To MRS. RUGGLES.*] She's handsome, too—[*Beginning to sob*] that's the worst of it.

WALTER. The very reason we wouldn't engage her, isn't it Jefferson?

JEFFERSON. [*With bow.*] I leave you to explain the whole sorry affair.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Puzzled.*] Wouldn't engage her? [*Sharply.*] Who is this—*this* woman?

WALTER. Do you want to know? [*Dramatically.*] Do you really want to know?

MRS. RUGGLES. I *insist* upon knowing.

WALTER. Well then—she's the new servant!

MRS. RUGGLES and BLANCHE. The new servant?

JEFFERSON. [*With sweeping bow.*] The new servant.

MRS. RUGGLES. Then why all this mystery—why lock her up in this room?

WALTER. Because—

JEFFERSON. [*After him.*] Because—

WALTER. Because we didn't approve of her.

BLANCHE. Didn't approve of her?

MRS. RUGGLES. And since when have you come to be the judges of the servants of this house?

WALTER. Isn't it about time we had something to say—about something? We refused to engage her because she was pretty.

MRS. RUGGLES. So!

JEFFERSON. Remembering the trouble we had with the last one on that account.

WALTER. To promote happiness, the girl for this household should be as homely as a hedge-fence.

MRS. RUGGLES. Let me get a look at her. Perhaps after all we may decide to accept her.

BLANCHE. Any servant is better than none—just at present.

WALTER. [*Opens door R. 1.*] Oh Lena! Lena! [*To Mrs. RUGGLES.*] That's her name, you know.

[*Enter VALESKA BIJOU demurely, door R. 1.*]

MRS. RUGGLES AND BLANCHE. [*Surprised.*] Well, well, well!

JEFFERSON. What did we tell you?

WALTER. [*To VALESKA—winking at her.*] Lena, my wife thinks differently than I do.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*To VALESKA.*] If I can approve of your references, I see no reason why we shouldn't come to terms. [*Bitterly to WALTER.*] I'll show you whether we're jealous or not.

[*Door bell rings below.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. Who can that be?

BLANCHE. Dora will open the door.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*To VALESKA.*] Then, Lena, go below to the kitchen. I'll join you there directly. Whenever I pull this bell-cord—[*Referring to same*] and you hear the bell in the kitchen, it means for you to come to this room. Understand?

VALESKA. [*Quietly.*] Yes, mam.

MRS. RUGGLES. Now go.

VALESKA. [*Crosses to L. 1, turns and looks at WALTER.*]

WALTER. [*Winks significantly.*]

VALESKA. [*Exits L. 1.*]

WALTER and JEFFERSON. [*Unseen by others, joyfully nudge each other in side.*]

[*Enter DORA C., coming from the R.*]

DORA. [*Announcing.*] Mrs. Brooks!

JEFFERSON and WALTER. [*Staggered.*] Mrs. Brooks!

CHARLEY and SLOCUM. [*Unseen by others, bob heads over screens, exchange glances, then quickly down again.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. [*To DORA.*] What, again?

DORA. That's what she said her name was. Must be a sister to the other one—even though they look nothing alike.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Puzzled.*] Her sister? Why what can she want here?

[*Enter C. MRS. ELIZABETH BROOKS, a plainly dressed woman, with side curls, wearing bonnet, shawl, white cotton gloves and carrying a stout umbrella.*]

MRS. BROOKS. [*Angrily.*] I want my husband!

MRS. RUGGLES and BLANCHE. Your husband?

MR. RUGGLES. Who are you, Madam?

MRS. BROOKS. Mrs. Charles Brooks!

CHARLEY and SLOCUM. [*Unseen by others, bob up from behind screens and immediately down again.*]

WALTER and JEFFERSON. [*Down R. business.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. Good gracious! Then who was the other woman?

MRS. BROOKS. An impostor!

ALL. No?

MRS. BROOKS. Yes. Oh, I've found my husband out at last. He went sailing today on board your husband's yacht and took this female with him.

MRS. RUGGLES. As his wife? Oh horrible!

WALTER. [*In mock seriousness.*] The villain—to impose on us in this manner!

JEFFERSON. [*Bitterly.*] The scoundrel! Had I but known!

WALTER. I shall never forgive Charley for this. He is no longer my friend.

JEFFERSON. Oh, base deceiver!

CHARLEY. [*Looking over screen—in pantomime appeals to them, unseen, however, by others.*]

MRS. BROOKS. [*To JEFFERSON and WALTER.*] Yet, you two should have known the truth at once.

WALTER and JEFFERSON. Eh? And pray how so?

MRS. BROOKS. You knew from the first this woman wasn't his wife.

WALTER. I knew nothing of the sort.

JEFFERSON. [*Indignant.*] How should we know?

MRS. RUGGLES and BLANCHE. [*Emphatically.*] Yes, Madam, how should they know?

MRS. BROOKS. Simply because they had *met me* before.

WALTER. [*Business.*] Eh?

MRS. BROOKS. [*Pointing at WALTER.*] Yes, you—[*Then at JEFFERSON*] and you! At the card party at our house only last Thursday night.

MRS. RUGGLES. Card party Thursday night?

JEFFERSON and WALTER. [*Business.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Sharply turning on JEFFERSON.*] Why, Jefferson, I thought you attended a lodge meeting that evening?

BLANCHE. [*To WALTER.*] Oh, Walter—Walter—say it isn't so.

WALTER. The woman's not right. I never saw her before.

JEFFERSON. [*With effort.*] Neither have I?

MRS. BROOKS. [*Raising umbrella threateningly.*] You dare deny it?

ALL. [*Business.*]

JEFFERSON. [*Trembling, cowers behind WALTER, R.*]

[*Glass crash heard off R.*]

MRS. BROOKS. What was that?

DORA. [*Quickly exits off c.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Alarmed.*] Goodness only knows.

JEFFERSON. [*Whining.*] This day will cost me ten years of my life.

BLANCHE. [*To MRS. RUGGLES.*] Why not ring for the police?

[*Enter DORA hurriedly, door c.*]

DORA. It's a madman! A madman! [*Quickly down l.*]

ALL. [*Greatly alarmed.*]

[*Another glass crash.*]

[*Enter JIM RYAN, a thickset, red-faced, large mustached individual, wearing loud checked suit and gray tall hat, fancy vest and large diamonds in shirt bosom and on fingers.*]

RYAN. [*Roaring.*] Where is she? Where is she? I want my wife!

CHARLEY and SLOCUM. [*Bobbing up from behind screens, unseen by others.*] He wants his wife! [*Then down again.*]

WALTER. Sir, I haven't got your wife.

BLANCHE. [*Indignant.*] Well I should hope not.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Regaining composure.*] Who are you, sir?

RYAN. Who am I? Owner of the "Imperial Comedy Company," Jim Ryan—the husband of the renowned Valeska Bijou!

WALTER and JEFFERSON. [*Completely collapse.*] O—h!

—RYAN. [*Loudly.*] There's been a lot o' strange going's on o' late, and when she said she wuz going shopping, I had me doubts, and started in to do some shadowin'. I wuz right, she tried to close my eye, and headed fer the

Grand Central. I tracked her as far as ~~New~~ Rochelle here, when she bounded into a taxi and give me the slip. But I was on the outlook and just after the shower seen her headin' for this place. For the last half hour I've been waitin' on the outside, every minute expectin' her to make a get-away. But nuthin' doin', and time being precious, I takes the law into my own hands and here I am. So no dallyin', come up with my wife.

WALTER. You're mistaken, old chap, there's—

RYAN. [*Furiously.*] I'm not mistaken and that chap-pie business don't go with me. I've got her dead to rights this time, but she ain't a goin' to jump my show, even if she does break my heart. Where is she?

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Suddenly.*] Ah, I have it—the mysterious woman!

MRS. BROOKS. [*Brandishing umbrella.*] The woman who my husband—

RYAN. [*Roaring.*] Your husband? Ah then I was right, arter all. There's a co-respondent in *this* case.

WALTER. [*Slapping JEFFERSON heavily on shoulder.*] I have it! I have it!

JEFFERSON. [*Rubbing shoulder.*] Then please don't give it to me.

WALTER. [*To RYAN.*] We, too, have been deceived. I can no longer conceal the truth or protect the wrong-doers. The woman you want is behind that screen. [*Points to screen.*]

RYAN. [*Roaring.*] At last! At last! [*Quickly over to screen, pulling it aside and exposing SLOCUM to view.*]

MRS. BROOKS. [*Gives a cry.*] Ah! That woman again! The woman who stole my husband! [*Brandishing umbrella, makes a dash toward SLOCUM.*]

SLOCUM. [*Dodging.*] Help! Help! Help! [*Finally exits off through window.*]

MRS. BROOKS. [*Follows him, striking at him with umbrella.*] You cat! You vixen! You man-stealer! [*Exits off through window, the sounds finally dying out in the distance.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. Wasn't that *your* wife?

RYAN. My wife? Not by a hundred miles.

JEFFERSON. Then, sir, you've made a terrible blunder in coming here this way.

WALTER. And I must ask you to leave at once.

MRS. RUGGLES. We've had enough excitement for one day.

RYAN. I don't go until I search the premises, and that settles it.

BLANCHE. [*To MRS. RUGGLES.*] The man's demented! He may become violent!

DORA. [*Wringing hands.*] Why not send for the police?

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Nervously.*] Yes, yes, the very thing. [*Pulls bell-cord several times.*]

WALTER. [*Endeavoring to quiet RYAN.*] Better run along now, without starting a rumpus.

RYAN. I ain't startin' anything I can't finish. [*Making a move as if to draw revolver.*] I've come prepared for trouble.

ALL. [*Draw away—their hands above their heads.*]

BLANCHE. [*Has parasol in one hand.*]

—RYAN. [*Espying same.*] Ah! I knew I was right! My wife's parasol!

DORA. [*Indignant. Snatching it from BLANCHE.*] My parasol!

—RYAN. Just look at the initials—J. R. My—

WALTER. [*Interrupting.*] Now see here, this has gone far enough! You leave this house at once, sir!

—RYAN. Not by a long shot! My wife's hid somewhere's

hereabouts and I'm going to find her if I have to shoot up the place. [*Draws revolver.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Wildly calling—pulling bell-cord.*] Oh, Lena! Lena! Why don't you come?

[*Enter VALESKA BIJOU, door L. 1, bearing a tray with several dishes.*]

VALESKA. You sent for me?

RYAN. [*Espying her—gives a cry.*] Valeska!

VALESKA. [*Dropping tray with a crash.*] Jim!

RYAN. At last! At last! [*Taking her in his arms.*] My wife! My wife!

JEFFERSON. [*R. has fallen limply into Walter's arms.*]

BLANCHE. [*L. has fainted in MRS. RUGGLES' arms.*]

CHARLEY. [*All amazement, is looking over screen.*]

RYAN. [*Is warmly embracing VALESKA C. as*]

CURTAIN DESCENDS.

ACT THE THIRD.

Same setting. Next morning. Furniture, etc., properly arranged in place. Empty stage at rise.

[*Enter DORA, sobbing, door C., followed by MRS. RUGGLES.*]

DORA. [*Coming down and seating at desk.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. It's a great warning to you, my child, never to get married.

DORA. [*Brokenly.*] I know, mama, but Bobby is quite a different sort of man.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*With folded arms.*] Quite nothing. Menfolks are all alike. I know them. Heartless, selfish

creatures. But thank goodness I'll soon be divorced from your father.

DORA. [*Sobs loudly.*]

[*Enter BLANCHE, door C.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. Has the lawyer gone?

BLANCHE. [*Wiping eyes with handkerchief.*] Yes.

MRS. RUGGLES. And you also signed the papers?

BLANCHE. Yes. He said he'd serve them at once to get the thing started.

MRS. RUGGLES. Good. The sooner, the better. We'll pack our few belongings and this afternoon quit this house forever.

BLANCHE. There's just one thing the Attorney didn't understand.

MRS. RUGGLES. What now, I wonder?

BLANCHE. At the actress's husband not raising a bigger rumpus when he discovered his wife.

MRS. RUGGLES. Didn't you explain how he dragged her off?

BLANCHE. Yes, but he had been told at the depot, they both left town on the six-thirty.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Surprised.*] And together?

BLANCHE. As if nothing in the world had happened.

MRS. RUGGLES. Strange.

BLANCHE. Oh yes, and he gave me these. [*Produces two note-books. Hands one to her.*] One for you—one for me.

MRS. RUGGLES. Why, what are we to—?

BLANCHE. [*Glances cautiously around.*] Keep memorandums of the various going's on. Secure evidence for our law suits!

MRS. RUGGLES. Take notes, eh? Excellent idea.

DORA. [*Her head buried in arm on desk. Sobs.*] Oh, Bobby! Bobby!

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Comforting her.*] Hush, dear.

[*Enter WALTER DILLINGHAM, a legal document in hand, hurriedly through window.*]

WALTER. [*To BLANCHE.*] Ah, here you are. My dear, what is the meaning of this? [*Holds out document toward her.*] A lawyer just forced it into my hand.

BLANCHE. The paper speaks for itself. I'm suing for divorce.

WALTER. [*Surprised.*] What—from me? [*Affected.*] Now, my dear, that's not fair of you. What have I done?

BLANCHE. What haven't you done?

WALTER. Made a few mistakes, I confess, but they were errors of judgment rather than of the heart. [*Offering paper.*] Take this back, my dear, and I promise you I'll never—

BLANCHE. [*Firmly.*] Not until you explain about the actress.

WALTER. [*Endeavoring to persuade her.*] Oh go on, take it back.

BLANCHE. [*Emphatically.*] No! Not until I know the truth. [*Off L. 1.*]

WALTER. [*Calling after her.*] Blanche, my dear! You don't know what you're doing! [*Aside, looking at document.*] This is a nice how-do-you-do. [*Calling after her.*] Blanche, I don't want this blame thing. Better take it back. [*Exits off L. 1.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Moving to C. and looking after him.*] Good! Blanche deserves a lot of credit for her deliberate stand.

[*Enter* JEFFERSON RUGGLES *sadly, through window, a legal document in hand.*]

JEFFERSON. [*To* MRS. RUGGLES.] Lulu! Lulu! Look at what the lawyer just handed me.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Her back to him.*] Well, what of it?

JEFFERSON. There's a whole lot of it. I didn't have the courage to wade through half of it. You don't mean it, do you, my dear?

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Bitterly.*] Oh, don't I? We'll see whether I'm as green as you think I am.

JEFFERSON. On the contrary, my dear, I never thought you green. [*Endeavoring to force document upon her.*] Take it back, Lulu, there's a good girl.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Unmoved.*] Your old taffy doesn't go any more.

JEFFERSON. Then you really insist on a divorce?

MRS. RUGGLES. Emphatically.

JEFFERSON. And the—the alimony?

MRS. RUGGLES. Yes.

JEFFERSON. And all the other things? Oh, I shall be bankrupt.

MRS. RUGGLES. You should have thought of the consequences when gallivanting about with the actress.

JEFFERSON. My dear, I never gallivanted. Besides, I thought all that was a thing of the past.

MRS. RUGGLES. Oh, you did, did you? Well you'll find that the most exciting part of it is yet to come. [*At door* L. 1.] When you can explain to my satisfaction the bringing of that actress under this roof, I will again converse with you, and not before. [*Off haughtily* L. 1.]

JEFFERSON. [*Crushed.*] Unhappy world! To think all this mess should be caused by a measly, common, ordinary, every-day pair of gloves. [*Calling after her,*

holding out document.] Lulu! Lulu! Better take this back, I don't want it. [*Off L. 1.*]

DORA. [*Who for some time has been examining blotter on desk. Starting.*] Hello! What's this? I wonder if— [*Glances toward table and espying mirror*] I can't believe he would wilfully have— [*Holds mirror in L. hand and blotter in front of same in R., permitting her to read what has been blotted there.*] Good gracious! He deceived us! He—

[*Enter MRS. RUGGLES from L. 1, followed by BLANCHE.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. [*To BLANCHE.*] Be firm, Blanche! Firm! We've brought the villains to bay at last!

DORA. [*Quickly to MRS. RUGGLES.*] Mama! Mama! We've been tricked.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Calmly.*] An old story, my dear.

DORA. [*Quickly.*] Yes, but that telegram! The telegram was a forgery!

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Puzzled.*] A forgery?

DORA. [*Excitedly.*] Yes, the one Bob showed you, showed me, showed everybody! [*Holds mirror so that she, too, can read what is blotted on blotter.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Reads.*] "Mr. Robert Slocum, care Walter Dillingham, New Rochelle, N. Y. Come home at once, your great, great grandfather just died."

BLANCHE. The telegram was written at that desk.

MRS. RUGGLES. And to deceive us for some purpose or other.

DORA. [*Brokenly.*] Oh, Bobby! Bobby! And I thought you unlike the others!

WALTER. [*From without L., calling.*] Blanche! Oh, Blanche!

JEFFERSON. [*Off L., calling.*] Lulu! Lulu, my dear!

MRS. RUGGLES. They're coming! [*Returns blotter and*

mirror to DORA.] Let me see no weakening! We must be firm! Firm!

[Enter WALTER, door L. 1, followed by JEFFERSON, both with legal documents in hands.]

JEFFERSON. Oh, here you are.

WALTER. *[With sarcasm.]* Holding a council of war, I suppose.

MRS. RUGGLES. And you'll find us better armed than ever before.

DORA. *[Crossing to L. 1, and holding up mirror and blotter. Brokenly.]* Oh, Walter! Dad! *[Off L. 1.]*

JEFFERSON. *[Puzzled.]* What's the matter with the girl?

BLANCHE. *[At door L. 1.]* We know all about Bobby's grandfather, and the alleged joke you played on us. *[Exits L. 1.]*

WALTER. *[Puzzled.]* Joke, joke?

JEFFERSON. *[Business.]* Grandfather?

MRS. RUGGLES. *[At door L. 1, dramatically.]* New blotters tell no lies! *[Exits off.]*

WALTER AND JEFFERSON. *[Look at each other.]*

WALTER. *[Repeating.]* Blotters?

JEFFERSON. Lies?

WALTER. *[Suddenly.]* Now I know! When I blotted that telegram—

JEFFERSON. It left a copy on the blotter. *[Bitterly.]* Oh, you're a smart one!

WALTER. *[Disconsolately.]* Was there ever such ill luck? *[To JEFFERSON.]* What can we do?

JEFFERSON. *[Whining.]* Tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the—

WALTER. *[Up.]* Would you break your promise to the lady?

JEFFERSON. Now see here, old chap, my promise to the lady has got me deep enough in the mire. It's time the lady did something for me. I'm going to make a clean breast of it.

WALTER. [*Sorrowfully.*] Too bad we didn't think of that in the first place.

[*Enter CHARLEY BROOKS, hurriedly through window, a legal document in hand.*]

CHARLEY. You're a nice crowd.

WALTER. What's the matter now?

CHARLEY. [*Handing him paper.*] Look at what's been handed me.

JEFFERSON. You've got nothing on us. We had ours ten minutes ago.

CHARLEY. [*Surprised.*] Then you're in the same boat?

JEFFERSON. [*Sadly.*] And likely to sink with you.

WALTER. [*Patting him on back.*] Charley, my boy, keep a stiff upper lip and you'll—

[*Enter BLANCHE L. 1, followed by MRS RUGGLES, each carrying a large bundles of letters.*]

BLANCHE. [*Marching deliberately to WALTER and forcing bundle of letters in his hand.*] Take back your letters! [*Then removing ring from finger and handing to him.*] And the wedding ring! [*Then solemnly over to L. 1.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Handing JEFFERSON ring.*] Here's the ring and here—[*Handing him bundle of letters*] your letters. [*Then solemnly over to L. 1.*]

BLANCHE AND MRS. RUGGLES. [*To CHARLEY. Pointing at him.*] It was you! *You*, who broke up this once

happy home! [*Then burying eyes in handkerchiefs, exit off L. 1, loudly sobbing.*]

CHARLEY. [*Staggered.*] What—me?

WALTER AND JEFFERSON. [*Together. Brokenly.*]
Yes—you!

CHARLEY. Why, I didn't know the first thing about it all until—

WALTER. [*Sharply.*] Well, it's got to be somebody's fault—

JEFFERSON. And it might as well be yours.

[*Enter MRS. RUGGLES and BLANCHE, note-books in hand, cautiously, door c., each getting behind screens, either side of door.*]

CHARLEY. [*Seriously.*] Now see here, fellows. With all my troubles, I had a bit of luck yesterday.

JEFFERSON. I'm glad to hear someone's had something.

CHARLEY. Goldfield, the horse that won the last race at Brighton, was later disqualified by the stewards so that I won heavily on a twenty to one shot.

WALTER. But how does that help?

CHARLEY. Don't you see? My wife wouldn't holler a bit about my being at the races—so long as I won a pot.

JEFFERSON. Just like Lulu!

WALTER. [*Cautiously looking around.*] And you want us to square you—

CHARLEY. About that yacht story.

WALTER. But in the meantime, what's to become of me?

JEFFERSON. [*Adding.*] Of us—[*Piqued.*] Don't always leave me out of it.

CHARLEY. [*Suddenly.*] Listen! What was that?

JEFFERSON. I heard nothing.

WALTER. [*Up to window, looks off.*] It's Bobby!

[*Enter SLOCUM, from window, holding up skirts, his hat and wig being awry.*]

SLOCUM. Oh, what a night I've had!

MRS. RUGGLES AND BLANCHE. [*Now looking over screen, take notes.*]

JEFFERSON. You've had nothing on the rest of us.

WALTER. [*To SLOCUM.*] Where have you been?

SLOCUM. I passed last night in the loft of Bradley's stable. [*Sadly.*] And oh! what a night it was.

WALTER. [*Incredulously.*] Slept in the barn?

JEFFERSON. I can't believe it.

SLOCUM. [*Sorrowfully.*] Well, if you'd have seen the things I saw— [*Loudly.*] I swear there were a thousand rats!

MRS. RUGGLES AND BLANCHE. [*Both give a shriek.*] Where? Where? [*Quickly behind screens.*]

JEFFERSON AND WALTER. [*Staggered—then wildly looking about.*] My wife's voice! [*Quickly go to doors L. 1, look off.*] Not here! [*Then to L. 3, look off.*] Not here.

CHARLEY. [*Nervously.*] I heard nothing.

JEFFERSON. [*Worried.*] Can it be I am going insane?

WALTER. [*To SLOCUM.*] I'm sorry for you, Bobby.

SLOCUM. [*Sadly.*] Anyway, it's all *your* fault. [*Points at CHARLEY.*]

CHARLEY. My fault again?

JEFFERSON. [*Cautiously looking off L. 1.*] Take care, the women are liable to overhear you.

WALTER. Yes, yes, we must be more careful. [*To SLOCUM.*] You'll have to get out of that rig and come back here and square yourself. [*To JEFFERSON.*] Here, old man, see Bobby gets some of your clothing.

JEFFERSON. [*At door L. 3.*] Yes, yes, this way, my boy. [*Off L. 3.*]

SLOCUM. Let me understand this. Square myself, you say?

WALTER. Yes—square yourself! Dora's found out everything.

SLOCUM. Found out everything? What do you mean?

WALTER. I mean that she—

CHARLEY. [*Who has moved to window. Starting back.*] Great scott! my wife!—

WALTER. [*Staggered.*] Your wife? And coming here?

CHARLEY. At a mile-a-minute clip.

WALTER. [*Quickly over to R. 1.*] Here, quick—get out of the way.

CHARLEY. [*At door R. 1.*] Thanks, old chap;—and you'll do all you can for me?

WALTER. Leave everything to me.

CHARLEY. Thanks. [*Off R. 1.*]

SLOCUM. [*Who has been nervously pacing floor.*] And what about me?

[*Enter JEFFERSON from L. 3, carrying coat and trousers on his arm.*]

JEFFERSON. I've been waiting for you. Here, jump into these.

SLOCUM. [*Grabbing them.*] That's the ticket. [*At door L. 3.*] You're a prince. [*Off.*]

JEFFERSON. I'm a fool, I know. [*To WALTER.*] What's up now?

WALTER. [*In loud whispers.*] Mrs. Brooks this time.

JEFFERSON. [*Starts.*]

[*Enter MRS. BROOKS, angrily, through window.*]

MRS. BROOKS. I'm so glad you're both here.

WALTER. What's happened, madam?

MRS. BROOKS. I've sued Charley for divorce.

JEFFERSON. [*In assumed surprise.*] No?

MRS. BROOKS. And I neglected to get the name of that co-respondent.

WALTER. Dear Mrs. Brooks, hadn't you better reconsider the matter?

MRS. BROOKS. [*Surprised.*] After what transpired last evening? [*Folding arms.*] Reconsider *nothing!*

WALTER. Yes, yes, madam; but supposing your husband is innocent?

MRS. BROOKS. That would be *supposing* a great deal.

WALTER. Just imagine if we could prove to you he had absolutely nothing whatever to do with the whole affair!

JEFFERSON. Hadn't so much as set foot on the yacht!

MRS. BROOKS. [*Looking from one to the other.*] But he told me—

WALTER. A lot of things to help *us* out.

MRS. BROOKS. [*Puzzled.*] To help *you* out?

JEFFERSON. [*Sadly.*] Yes.

WALTER. [*Looking around before speaking. Then confidentially.*] I'll tell you. But we don't want our wives to know.

MRS. RUGGLES AND BLANCHE. [*Now look over screen, with hands to ears to catch every word.*]

WALTER. [*To Mrs. Brooks.*] We had an actress on board the yacht yesterday.

MRS. RUGGLES AND BLANCHE. [*Aside.*] An actress! [*Both down.*]

WALTER. [*Looking around before speaking.*] She left a pair of gloves on board, and we've had our own time trying to satisfactorily explain matters.

JEFFERSON. Without telling the truth.

MRS. BROOKS. I should imagine so. But my husband?

WALTER. Was innocently drawn into the affair.

MRS. BROOKS. But that awful woman!

WALTER. Is really *no* woman at all.

JEFFERSON. [*Confidentially—chuckling gleefully.*] My future son-in-law in disguise.

MRS. RUGGLES AND BLANCHE. [*Bob up from behind screens. Aside.*] Bobby Slocum, eh? The scoundrel! [*Quickly down again.*]

MRS. BROOKS. But my husband told a falsehood. Stated he would be detained at the office—

WALTER. Instead of which he went to the races.

MRS. BROOKS. Races!

[*Enter CHARLEY BROOKS from R. 1, a roll of bills in each hand.*]

CHARLEY. And won five hundred dollars!

MRS. BROOKS. [*Staggered.*] Charley! [*Recovering.*] Then why didn't you explain matters in the first place?

CHARLEY. Because in the first place I was a loser. It was only after the stewards disqualified the winner that I—

MRS. BROOKS. [*Affected.*] Had I but known! Charley, can you forgive me?

CHARLEY. In a minute! [*Holding out legal document.*] But what about this blamed thing—can I tear it up?

MRS. BROOKS. [*Warmly.*] With all my heart!

CHARLEY. [*Tears document in two, throwing particles over head, then with arms outstretched.*] Elizabeth!

MRS. BROOKS. [*In his arms.*] Charley!

JEFFERSON. Bless you, my children, bless you!

[*Toot of automobile horn heard off R.*]

WALTER. [*To MRS. BROOKS.*] Remember—our wives are not to know.

MRS. BROOKS. Not a word, as far as I'm concerned.
[To CHARLEY.] Come dear, we'll have to call at the lawyer's.

CHARLEY. You're right!—and put a stop to that suit.
[To others.] Bye, bye, boys, and good luck! [Arm in arm with MRS. BROOKS, exits through window.]

JEFFERSON. [Disconsolately.] Well, there's one lucky man in the world, after all.

WALTER. [Is at window, waving handkerchief after CHARLEY and MRS. BROOKS.]

[Toot of automobile horn heard again.]

WALTER. [Starts.] By Jove!—the actress!

JEFFERSON. Eh? You don't mean it!

WALTER. [Looks off.] I wonder what's brought her back? [Quickly over to L. 1.]

JEFFERSON. [Nervously paces floor.]

[Enter VALESKA BIJOU, stylishly gowned, through window.]

VALESKA. [Espying WALTER.] Mr. Dillingham!
[Throws her arms about him.] Oh, I'm so glad to see you.

WALTER AND JEFFERSON. [Business.]

MRS. RUGGLES AND BLANCHE. [Look over screens and hurriedly make notes.]

JEFFERSON. [Nervously.] What's up now?

VALESKA. [Turning to JEFFERSON.] Oh, you poor old man! [Hysterically throws arms about his neck.]

JEFFERSON. [Business.] Help! Help! [Aside.] If my wife should see me now!

WALTER. [Nervously glancing about.] What brought you here?

VALESKA. [Recovering.] It's a matter of life and death for all of us!

ALL. [Business.]

JEFFERSON. [*Repeating.*] Life and death?

VALESKA. My husband is furious; and though I told the truth, he refused to believe me. And as he's liable to pay you a visit, I've come to put you on your guard. [*Dramatically.*] Don't lie to him,—please don't lie to him. He may kill us all if you do.

JEFFERSON AND WALTER. [*Business.*]

MRS. RUGGLES AND BLANCHE. [*Quickly down behind screens.*]

JEFFERSON. Pleasant prospects, I must say.

VALESKA. Now, if I could only recover my—

WALTER. [*To JEFFERSON.*] Quick!—the parasol! It's in the back room.

JEFFERSON. [*Excitedly.*] Yes, yes! [*Exits hurriedly L. 1.*]

WALTER. [*To VALESKA.*] I'll have your gloves in a minute.

VALESKA. Oh, I'm so glad.

WALTER. [*At door L. 3. Calling to him.*] Bobby! oh, Bobby! let me have those gloves, please.

SLOCUM. [*From within.*] Right away.

[*Enter JEFFERSON from L. 1 with parasol.*]

JEFFERSON. [*Handing to VALESKA.*] Your parasol. [*Bows low.*]

VALESKA. Thank you so much.

[*Enter ROBERT SLOCUM from L. 3, wearing an ill-fitting pair of trousers, loose vest, no collar, and the lady's wig.*]

SLOCUM. Here you are. [*Hands WALTER gloves.*]

MRS. RUGGLES AND BLANCHE. [*Look over screen, exchange glances—then down again.*]

WALTER. [*Taking them and handing to VALESKA.*] Your gloves. [*Bows low.*]

[*Door-bell rings below.*]

WALTER. [*To SLOCUM.*] And now you'd better get out of here.

SLOCUM. [*Indignantly.*] Why,—what's the matter?

JEFFERSON. Better look in a mirror.

SLOCUM. [*Placing hand to head, and, discovering wig, snatches it off.*] I forgot that! [*Exits off L. 3.*]

VALESKA. [*Nervously.*] Supposing it should be my husband?

JEFFERSON. I *hope* it isn't!

WALTER. [*Ushering her to R. 1.*] Better step in here until—

VALESKA. [*Quickly.*] —He's gone! Yes, yes,—a good idea! [*Off R. 1.*]

[*Enter JIM RYAN door C.*]

RYAN. [*Boisterously.*] Ah, gentlemen, glad to find you at home. I didn't have time to ask you any questions last night on account o' havin' to make that train for the night show; but I've come back—[*Roaring*—I've come back—

JEFFERSON. Yes;—we see you're back.

RYAN. I've come without her knowin' a thing erbout it. I'm after perticulars. Now, then, what was she doin' on that yacht?

WALTER. So she told you *that*, did she?

RYAN. Yes, and a whole lot o' other things. But I'm not as easy as I look.

WALTER. Your wife came here to look over some lots which I own on Pleasure Island, in the middle of Long Island Sound.

RYAN. [*Anxiously.*] Yes, yes.

WALTER. She said she wanted to make you a birthday present, and thought to surprise you.

RYAN. I'm clean knocked off my pins.

WALTER. She pledged us to secrecy about the entire matter, and that's what landed us in all this trouble.

JEFFERSON. No;—it was the gloves did that.

RYAN. [*Looking from one to the other.*] Say,—that's the very tale she spun to me. It sounded like a false alarm,—but, dang me, if it ain't sixteen-carat after all!

WALTER. I'm to deliver the deeds on the first of the month.

RYAN. The day before my birthday! Well, what do you know erbout that? I'll have to square myself—sure thing!

WALTER. That can be easily done. [*Opens door R. 1.*] Here she is!

[*Enter VALESKA BIJOU R. 1.*]

RYAN. [*With arms outstretched.*] Valeska! [*Embraces her.*] Say,—I deserve a horse-whippin'.

JEFFERSON. [*Whining.*] But what about us?

WALTER. [*To RYAN.*] You've got to help us out.

MRS. RUGGLES AND BLANCHIE. [*Look over screens.*]

RYAN. Sure thing! What's der spiel?

WALTER. It wouldn't do to tell Blanche the truth about the yachting trip.

JEFFERSON. Decidedly not. That real estate deal would strike Lulu as decidedly untruthful.

WALTER. [*Quickly.*] I have it! [*To RYAN.*] You can explain to the women you accompanied your wife with a view to buying the blamed yacht and that you bound us to secrecy to keep it out of the papers.

JEFFERSON. Yes;—but you've already told them Charley Brooks—

WALTER. Oh, we've told them so many things one more story won't make any difference.

RYAN. I'll stand fer anything you say.

WALTER. Good! [*To JEFFERSON.*] Ring that bell!

JEFFERSON. [*Gleefully pulls bell-cord.*] Thank goodness, we're near out of this.

[*Enter DORA door L. 1.*]

DORA. Did you ring, papa?

WALTER. Summon the ladies—they shall know the truth.

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Looking over screen.*] We know the truth already!

WALTER AND JEFFERSON. [*Thunderstruck—turn and learn the truth.*] Blanche! Lulu!

MRS. RUGGLES and BLANCHE. [*Coming out from behind screens.*] We heard everything.

SLOCUM. [*Out from L. 3, and unseen by others, takes long strides and exits off door C.*]

JEFFERSON. Good gracious!

MRS. RUGGLES. So there's no need of telling a falsehood.

BLANCHE. But why didn't you tell the truth in the first place?

JEFFERSON AND WALTER. [*Sheepishly looking at each other.*] Why didn't we?

JEFFERSON. [*Sorrowfully to others.*] Because we were afraid.

WALTER. Too cowardly!

MRS. RUGGLES. And suffered, in consequence.

[*Enter ROBERT SLOCUM hurriedly door C.*]

SLOCUM. Hello, everybody! Well, I got back!

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Sharply.*] You villain! You never even went away!

SLOCUM. [*Indignantly.*] Never went away? Why, my great-great-grandfather—

DORA. [*Holds up mirror and blotter for him to read.*]

SLOCUM. [*Realizing truth.*] Hamlet's ghost!

DORA. [*Laughingly.*] A dead give away, Bobby!

SLOCUM. [*Sheepishly.*] Well, say,—I admit it. I plead guilty with the rest of them.

WALTER. [*To BLANCHE and MRS. RUGGLES.*] Can you forgive us? [*Holds out legal document.*]

MRS. RUGGLES. [*Reluctantly.*] Well,—on the one condition we all move back to town.

WALTER. [*Enthusiastically.*] Agreed!

MRS. RUGGLES AND BLANCHE. [*Quickly taking legal documents and tearing in two.*]

WALTER. Blanche! [*Embraces her.*]

JEFFERSON. [*Embracing MRS. RUGGLES.*] Lulu!

SLOCUM. [*Embracing DORA.*] Dora!

RYAN. [*Observing others. To VALESKA.*] We might just as well get in on this, too. [*With outstretched arms.*] Valeska! [*All are embracing as*

CURTAIN DESCENDS.]

THE MILL OF THE GODS



Terry, unjustly imprisoned, escapes, and Lawrence blackmails Terry into helping him trick Patty Jefferson, an orphan. When Terry learns Patty is his own child, he rebels, and Lawrence sends him back to prison.

PATTY. No, Lawrence, let me speak to him!
[*She turns and crosses to TERRY.*] Did you really just pretend you were John Gray for

money?

TERRY [*after a long silence*]. Yes.

PATTY. Did you keep my letters so that my daddy couldn't find me?

TERRY [*after a silent struggle*]. Yes.

PATTY. Didn't you really care a thing about me—all the time?

TERRY [*with a sob*]. No.

PATTY. Did you forge that note?

TERRY. Yes. Oh, what have I done! If there is a God in heaven, I'll be makin' this right with you some day!

PATTY. Please—don't feel that way. You must have wanted the money terribly. I'm sorry you didn't really like me. Because I do like you, and I'll always remember you.

And when Terry and Lawrence are alone—

TERRY. Lawrence Stanton, as God is my witness, if you do be sendin' me back to that hell, you'll suffer for it!

LAWRENCE. No, thanks. The pleasure will be all yours!

TERRY. Why don't you shoot me now?

LAWRENCE. You're going to die—by degrees.

TERRY. What good will it be doin' you to send me back?

LAWRENCE. Oh, there'll be a certain satisfaction in thinking about it! No man ever tried to get the best of me before!

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YOU WOULDN'T FOOL ME!

When Cameron befriends young Andy, he doesn't know he's secretly married. So when he gets in a jam, he demands Andy's help.

CAMERON. She told me all about her family, and she asked my name——

ANDY. My g-g-g-gosh, you didn't give her your n-n-name, did you?

CAMERON. Oh, no!

ANDY. Th-thank g-g-g-goodness.

CAMERON. I gave her yours!

ANDY. Wh-wh-wh-what?

CAMERON. Now, don't take it that way! It was perfectly all right!

Only, if she'd ever inquire here for me, it wouldn't go over so well with my wife.

ANDY [*rising*]. But my w-w-wife——I mean your w-w-wife——I'm getting out of here! No w-wandering woman's going to f-f-find me at th-th-this address! F-farewell, s-so long, and g-good bye!

CAMERON. But, Andy, wait! I haven't told you what I wanted!

ANDY. You t-t-took my name! What else do you w-want?

And Grandma Cameron, who is deaf, helps keep the mix-up mixed.

ANDY. Was Victor G-G-Golden here?

GRANDMA. How?

ANDY [*very distinctly*]. Was Mr. G-Golden here?

GRANDMA. Yes.

ANDY. My gosh! Bet he was after me! When?

GRANDMA. I said yes. It's awful cold. Why don't they tend to the furnace?

ANDY [*thrusting the card at her*]. No! No! Was Victor G-Golden here?

GRANDMA. Don't shout. I said it is cold in here. Why don't they start the furnace?

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DEPEND ON ME!



A summer resort, with a charming and designing woman——

OLGA. My name is Sundberg. Olga Sundberg.

MC CORMICK [*engrossed in his work*]. How-do-you-do.

OLGA [*rises and undulates across the stage to him*]. I don't believe I caught your name?

MC CORMICK. I didn't give it.

OLGA [*strolling L C*]. Don't you get awfully lonesome sometimes?

MC CORMICK. Not for the company of women. [*He goes out.*]

KATHERINE [*entering*]. How was he?

OLGA. A bit difficult. Next time you talk to him you might stress my loving nature.

KATHERINE. Yes, Miss Olga. Your loving nature.

And a lonesome wife, Sophie——

SOPHIE. I wonder where John is now?

LAURA. On the train, of course!

SOPHIE. I wonder just where the train is?

LAURA [*impatiently*]. If you just had a time table, we could follow him from town to town.

SOPHIE. I asked for one at the desk. They were out just now.

Then her jealous husband, John, turns up in disguise, and Sophie leads him a life.

SOPHIE. John's rather difficult at times.

JOHN. What?

SOPHIE. John, my husband, he's rather difficult at times. He has such a temper. I wish he had a disposition like Mr. Windsor.

JOHN. Like that young——

SOPHIE. Yes, did you notice what a dear he is?

JOHN. I noticed you seemed to enjoy him enough.

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THREE MOSS ROSES



Polly and Billy compare notes.

POLLY [*crossing D R C to BILLY*]. Billy, what makes all the boys fall in love with Elaine?

BILLY. She's so cute you just can't help it.

POLLY. Oh!

BILLY. It's the way she walks, and talks, and, oh, it's *everything*! Why, when she pats you on the hand and says, "Goosie"—you just want to take her in your arms and hug her.

They decide to practice the gentle art of love-making.

POLLY. I *wish* I could say "Goosie!"

BILLY [*looking off L*]. Here comes Senator Smithson.

POLLY. Gosh, he's a bore!

BILLY. Practice on him, why don't you?

POLLY. He'd think I was crazy.

BILLY. He'll eat it up. Say, this will be good. [*BILLY ducks back of POLLY'S booth, L C, as UNCLE OLLIE enters L. During the following scene, BILLY'S head may continually be seen popping up over the counter, making signs to POLLY behind UNCLE OLLIE'S back.*]

[*UNCLE OLLIE enters L.*]

UNCLE OLLIE [*advancing to C, rubbing his hands*]. Ah, Miss Polly! Fresh as the rosebud in May!

POLLY [*rising and coming to meet him, using ELAINE'S sweetest tones*]. Oh, Senator, you do say such sweet things!

UNCLE OLLIE. With such a sweet subject, my dear, how could I help it?

POLLY. Why, Senator, are you trying to flirt with little me?

[*POLLY gives UNCLE OLLIE both of her hands.*]

[*BILLY, bobbing up behind the counter, claps his hands in dumb show.*]

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SOUND YOUR HORN!



When tyrannical Mrs. Van Dyke comes to run Christine and her wayside stand off the land, her refreshingly impudent niece, Diane, and Angus, her lawyer, come alone.

CHRISTINE [*still smiling, and speaking quietly*]. I'm going to stand up for my rights!

MRS. VAN DYKE. Angus, come over here and take care of this young snip.

ANGUS. I knew you'd be calling on me before long.

MRS. VAN DYKE [*angrily*]. Oh, don't swell up, you old fool!

I'm just calling on you because I'm so mad I can't talk.

DIANE [*easily*]. I never thought I'd live to see it.

ANGUS [*to CHRISTINE*]. My dear young lady—

MRS. VAN DYKE. None of that soft-soap of yours, Angus.

Things get complicated when Diane's brother, Ted, defies his aunt, and works for Christine. But the old lady still has a trick or two up her sleeve. This is the end of Act Two.

CHRISTINE. I'll have no further need of your services. I'm selling the stand to Mrs. Van Dyke. [*She goes out.*]

MRS. VAN DYKE [*holding paper before him*]. And while you're waiting, you might read this. It's all about you, and it's the reason she's leaving town. [*TED grabs paper.*]

TED [*reading*]. "The engagement of Josephine Adams to Theodore Townley Webster—" Some of your work, huh?

MRS. VAN DYKE. Yes, I did it.

Homer and Etta furnish the laughs in this dramatic comedy.

HOMER. It's something that I writ myself. It's a piece of poetry. Just a little something I've been dashing off for several weeks. [*Reads.*] "I know a wondrous maiden fair, with laughing eyes and languorous hair. Whenever I see her on the street, the sight does cause my heart to beat." [*Auto horn off R.*]

ETTA. You didn't copy that from one of them classical poets, did you?

A farce-comedy in 3 acts, by Howard Reed; 4 m, 6 w. Time, an evening. Scene, 1 interior. Royalty free upon purchase of 10 copies. Price, 50 cents.

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